THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

June/July, 2011 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Voices from Afghanistan

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Editor's Note: The following quotes are taken from interviews and presentations attended by the author during a March 2011 fact-finding trip to Afghanistan.

Aschiana Camp for Internally Displaced People, outside Kabul

Schaeffer-Duffy (S-D): How did you come to be in this camp?
Camp elder, Rahamat ola Rahomi: The US/NATO bombed our village many times. In one night's bombing, 90 of the 1,000 villagers were killed. In my house, my parents were killed and two other relatives were injured. We [finally] left our village in Kandahar because of a very dangerous US bombing. Twenty houses were destroyed, killing most of the residents. Ten Talibs, who had been there, fled and were unharmed. Those of us who survived came here in 2010. It took three days and three nights to get here. People are still so scared that they hide when even commercial planes fly overhead.

S-D: What are the conditions like here?
Rahamat: We have 870 mud huts for about 8,000 people, no electricity, running water, medical clinic, or school. We have one manual water pump for every 200 families. There's a lot of sickness. The UN provided us some help. The Red Crescent Society promised 100 tents, but never delivered them. Six months ago, the Improvement of Women Organization took a census, promised help, and hasn't returned yet either. Much of the aid donated for us ends up for sale in the Kabul markets.

S-D: If you could, what would you say to President Obama?
Rahamat: Put yourself in our place and think. Stop bombing innocent civilians! You are killing women and children! If someone did this to your children, how would you react?

S-D: How is it that you are so hospitable to people from the country trying to kill you?
Rahamat: *Politicians* are trying to kill my children. The US and the Taliban are the same. Soldiers here or Taliban in our village are like gods. They can do anything they want to do. We expect a lot from you, to pass our message on. We want all governments to stop killing children.

Two of Rahamat's children

Open Society Center, Kabul

S-D: Describe the work of Open Society.
Director Zahra Mobtaker: Open Society was established in 2010 to promote human rights and democracy.... We encourage Afghans to speak out about human rights, to overcome fear. We held a competition to describe what people felt about human rights. We put together photos on the

(Continued on Page 4)

The Inconvenient Truth about Bottled Water

by Hollis Dunlop

Summer is a glorious time to get outside and take in the sun. Whether you're doing low-impact activities, like relaxing in a hammock in the backyard, or lying out on a beach, or choosing more physical activities, like hiking or bike riding, there is one thing you are going to need to take with you– water, the best companion for staying happy, healthy, and hydrated.

But wait! Before going to the fridge and grabbing that bottle of Poland Spring, Dasani, Aquafina, what have you, STOP. THINK. Do you ever consider the consequences of a decision as seemingly insignificant as drinking out of a plastic water bottle? Probably not.

Well, as a former proponent of bottled water, I'm here to share with you the harsh realities that I was made aware of as a sophomore at Providence College. Not only is bottled water thousands of times more expensive than tap water in the monetary sense, made evident through the $10.6 billion spent by Americans on bottled water in 2009, but the impact of bottled water on the environment is even more startling.

The following are some quick facts on bottled water versus tap water:

1) Roughly 50 billion plastic water bottles end up in US landfills each year- That's 140 million every day—enough that, if laid end to end, they would reach China and back.

2) In 2008, Americans drank an aver-

(Continued on Page 2)

Bottled Water

(Continued from Page 1)

age of 215 bottles of water each, for a total of 66 billion bottles. Of that total, only 22% was recycled.

3) It takes over 700 years for plastic to decompose.

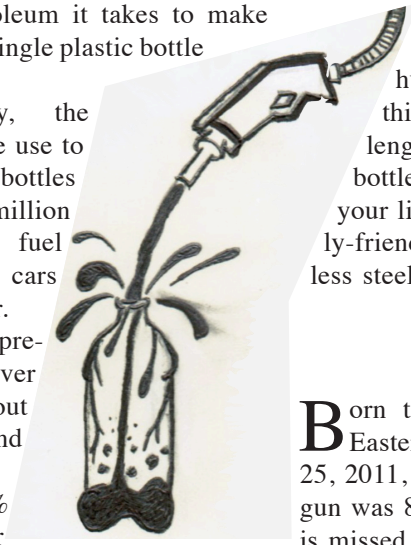
4) Plastic pollution is a world-wide problem. There is a growing "garbage patch" of plastic, estimated to be more than twice the size of Texas, floating in the North Pacific Ocean. Google "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch."

5) Picture a disposable water bottle one quarter full of petroleum. That is how much petroleum it takes to make and distribute a single plastic bottle of water.

6) Currently, the amount of oil we use to produce water bottles each year (17 million barrels) could fuel over 1,000,000 cars for an entire year.

7) People prefer tap water over bottled water 4 out of 5 times in blind taste tests.

8) Over 25% of bottled water is actually filtered tap water.



Aiden Duffy

So, bottled water is emptying our wallets and ruining our ecosystems. Now, you might want to take this as an opportunity for introspection. How many bottles of water do you drink a day? As a teenager playing sports, I personally used to drink, on average, five bottles per day— that adds up to a whole lot of plastic waste.

However, once I was introduced to this information nearly two years ago, I took a pledge with the Think Outside the Bottle Campaign, run by Corporate Accountability International, to stop drinking from water bottles and start drinking tap water. I haven't had a bottle of water since that day in 2009. As a Catholic youth, I feel that it is my duty to be a steward of God's creation and to protect and respect all of the beauty that nature has to offer. I'm no longer giving in to corporate gimmicks and the false belief that I need to purchase something that should be free.

So, as a member of the human race and a resident of this planet, I offer you this challenge. Put down the plastic water bottle this summer and for the rest of your life. Pick up a more ecologically-friendly companion— like a stainless steel bottle or, better yet, a mason jar—and turn on the tap. Ω

Editor's Note: The author, a junior at Providence College, volunteered during her 2011 winter break at Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker. For additional resources on bottled water, go to: www.back2tap.com/, www.foodandwaterwatch.org/issues/, or www.stopcorporateabuse.org/think-outside-bottle/.

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CATHOLIC RADICAL

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52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610 Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089
Email:theresecw2@gmail.com

Founded in 1933, The Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Father Bernie Gilgun

Born to Eternal Life on Easter Monday, April 25, 2011, Father Bernie Gilgun was 84 years young and is missed by those whom he served so well in the Diocese of Worcester and beyond.

Fr. Bernie says Mass for our 20th anniversary

A recovered alcoholic, an extraordinary priest, a long-time Catholic Worker, and an early civil rights activist, Father Bernie combined a deep love of the Church with a passion for justice. As Mike Boover said in Father Bernie's obituary, he always kept an eye out for the plight of God's poor, whom he called the true "treasures of the Church." He was the spiritual anchor of the House of Ammon, Mustard Seed, and Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker communities.

In a homily he gave at the Mustard Seed on June 5, 2009, he said, "We learn to love the Son of God in prayerful meditation, day in and day out, to be truly grateful, for He has given His life for us. Greater love than this no one ever had." Father Bernie helped us all to love and follow Christ.

We welcome those who knew Father Bernie to share memories of him at 2 p.m., July 10, in Worcester. Refreshments will be provided. Call Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker at 508 753-588 for details. Ω

One Less Brick in the Wall

by Roger Waters

In 1980, a song I wrote, "Another Brick in the Wall Part 2," [for my band, Pink Floyd] was banned by the government of South Africa because it was being used by Black South African children to advocate their right to equal education. That apartheid government imposed a cultural blockade on certain songs—including mine.

Twenty-five years later, Palestinian children participating in a West Bank festival used the song to protest Israel's apartheid wall. They sang "We don't need no occupation! We don't need no racist wall!" At the time, I hadn't seen first-hand what they were singing about. A year later, I contracted to perform in Tel Aviv.

Palestinians from the movement advocating an academic and cultural boycott of Israel urged me to reconsider. I had already spoken out against the apartheid wall, but I was unsure whether a cultural boycott was the right way to go. They asked that I visit the Occupied Palestinian Territory, to see the wall for myself before I made up my mind. I agreed.

Under the protection of the United Nations, I visited Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Nothing could have prepared me for what I saw that day.

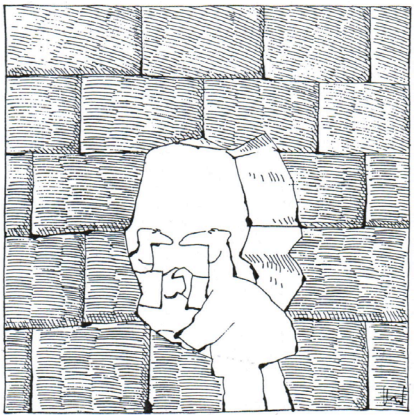
The wall is an appalling edifice to behold. It is policed by young Israeli soldiers who treated me with disdainful aggression. Imagine what it must be like for the Palestinians, for the underclass, for the passbook carriers.

I knew then that my conscience would not allow me to walk away from that wall, from the fate of the Palestinians I met, people whose lives are crushed daily in a multitude of ways by Israel's occupation. In solidarity, and somewhat impotently, I wrote on their wall that day: "We don't need no thought control."

Realising at that point that my presence on a Tel Aviv stage would inadvertently legitimise the oppression I was witnessing, I cancelled my gig at the football stadium in Tel Aviv.

I moved it to Neve Shalom, an agricultural community devoted to growing chick peas and also, admirably, to cooperation between people of different faiths—where Muslim, Christian and Jew live and work side by side in harmony.Against all expectations, it became the biggest music event in the short history of Israel. About 60,000 fans battled traffic jams to attend. It was extraordinarily moving for me and my band, and at the end of the gig I was moved to exhort the young people gathered there to demand of their government that it attempt to make peace with their neighbours and respect the civil rights of Palestinians living in Israel.

Sadly, in the intervening years, the Israeli government has made no attempt to implement legislation that would grant Israeli Arabs civil rights equal to those



Len Munnik

enjoyed by Israeli Jews. The wall has grown, inexorably, illegally annexing more and more of the West Bank.

I had learned that day in Bethlehem in 2006 something of what it means to live under occupation, imprisoned behind a wall. It means that a Palestinian farmer must watch olive groves, centuries old, be uprooted. It means that a Palestinian student cannot get to school because the checkpoint is closed. It means a woman may give birth in a car, because the soldier won't let her pass to the hospital that's a ten minute drive away. It means a Palestinian artist cannot travel abroad to exhibit work, or to show a film in an international film festival.

For the people of Gaza, locked in a virtual prison behind the wall of Israel's illegal blockade, it means another set of injustices. It means that children go to sleep hungry, many chronically malnourished. It means that fathers and mothers, unable to work in a decimated economy, have no means to support their families. It means that university students with scholarships to study abroad must watch the opportunity of a lifetime slip away because they are not allowed to travel.

In my view, the abhorrent and draconian control Israel wields over the besieged Palestinians in Gaza and the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank (including East Jerusalem), coupled with its denial of the rights of refugees to return to their homes in Israel, demands that fair-minded people around the world support Palestinian nonviolent resistance. Where governments refuse to act, people must—with whatever peaceful means are at their disposal. For some, that meant joining the humanitarian flotilla that tried to bring much needed humanitarian aid to Gaza.

For me, it means declaring my intention to stand in solidarity, not only with the people of Palestine, but also with the many thousands of Israelis who disagree with their government's racist and colonial policies, by joining the campaign of boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel, until it satisfies three basic human rights demanded in international law:

1) Ending its occupation and colonisation of all Arab lands and dismantling the wall; 2) Recognising the fundamental rights of Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and 3) Respecting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.

My conviction is born in the idea that all people deserve basic human rights. My position is not anti-Semitic. This is not an attack on the people of Israel. This is a plea to my colleagues in the music industry, and also to artists in other disciplines, to join this cultural boycott.

Artists were right to refuse to play in South Africa's Sun City resort until apartheid fell and whites and blacks enjoyed equal rights. And we are right to refuse to play in Israel until the day comes—and it surely will come—when "The Wall" of occupation falls and Palestinians live alongside Israelis in the peace, freedom, justice, and dignity that they all deserve.Ω

Afghanistan

(Continued from Page 1)

Zahra Mobtaker

effects of war on civilians and organized a singing group to bring a message of peace to the rural poor. We drew peace cartoons on the walls of mosques and other buildings, and none of the drawings have been vandalized. We want to train Afghans to put up web blogs and work to promote a culture of peace.

S-D: Is it difficult being a woman director in Afghanistan?
Zahra: This is a very patriarchal culture, which dictates that the views of men be heard and implemented rather than those of women. It is very difficult for a woman to seek education and to let her views be known. I was interviewed by Afghan reporters who were very surprised that a woman could have so many views.

Humanitarian Aid Director
(Whose organization asked names not be used for fear of reprisals from the Afghan government)

S-D: What can you tell us about corruption in Afghanistan?
Anonymous: Billions cannot be accounted for. Corruption in USAID is so great that bribes begin when a proposal is made and funds are continually siphoned off until very little reaches its goal. The book **Descent Into Chaos** documents it. In Afghanistan, even a small project [by a non-governmental organization] is better than all the big projects combined.

S-D: What is your opinion of the US military presence in Afghanistan?
Anonymous: The US military goes into villages...to promote democracy, but they come in Humvees, flak jackets, and helmets, carrying guns. The soldiers say the children are so receptive to their message, but villagers say that, when the soldiers leave, all the democracy materials are in the trash. The children are only eager to get the candy the soldiers give out.Most alarming though, is the US policy of paying warlords against the Taliban. They've received billions and are very scary....

S-D: How do you rate peace prospects?
Anonymous: What [NGOs] do makes a difference, step by step. I worry it's one step forward and two steps back because of the military and corruption, but a little girl, in a school we run, stood on a chair and said, "Knowledge leads to peace!"

Lena Jahanger
Teacher at the Kabul School of Religion and Knowledge

S-D: Describe your school.
Lena: We have 500 students, girls in the morning and boys in the afternoon. It costs $16 a month. The students study for 12 years and then take an exam for admission to the university, but it is very difficult. Few pass. Others try to go to private universities, but they are very expensive. There is 20% illiteracy in Kabul. Three per cent of Afghan students have access to the internet. We teach our students English and the use of computers. Some graduates have gone on to study in India, Pakistan, and the US. Unemployment here is very high. Seventy-five percent of university graduates are jobless. Many of them leave the country. But it used to be that students wanted to be soldiers or police officers. Now they hope to become doctors and other professions. My hope and dream was to become a teacher. My biggest priority is training professional teachers. This is more important than nice school buildings. Many foreigners donate for building schools which are useless without professional teachers.

Lena with a student

S-D: Tell us about schools elsewhere.
Lena: In the public schools, the biggest problem is class size, 50-60 per class for elementary students versus 20-30 here. In some high schools, there are 100 per class. The percentage of children who go to school in Kandahar is much lower than here for security reasons.

S-D: Does corruption effect schools?
Lena: Corruption faces education too. The US and Sweden donated textbooks. Many of them can be found in the bazaars for sale. The distributors do not turn them over for free as they should.

S-D: Is there a better or worse chance for peace if the US troops leave?
Lena: The chance for peace would be better if the US troops left. We should do everything by ourselves. Instead of spending so much time on war, they should spend it on education.

Zebi Mazoori
Director of the Transitional Justice Coordination Group

S-D: Describe your organization.
Zebi: Transitional Justice represents 26 human rights organizations, including Physicians for Human Rights and Civil Society, working for victims' rights.

S-D: What is your biggest challenge?
Zebi: ...The government reported a number of Taliban were "turned" on the promise of jobs and financial support, but our information on the ground is that most of these men are actually ordinary criminals who come in with a gun to turn in and reap the benefits. They can go out and commit more crimes and come back and get amnesty again and again. It undermines justice. Those who commit crimes should not be given privileges. We need a truth commission. It should be up to the victims whether to forgive or not. War criminals need to admit they've done wrong. Instead, many are armed as militia, not accountable to anyone. An identical program from 1989-1991 by the Soviets granted amnesty to mujahideen and then armed them. After the Soviet collapse, these militias turned on each other as warlords committing the worst crimes ever.

S-D: Won't war crimes trials further destabilise the country?

Zebi: In a 2004 poll, 76.4% of Afghans said they believe that bringing war criminals to justice increases stability, while only 10% said it decreases it. Here's an example: A woman complained to the authorities that her son was forcibly recruited to the Afghan army. She was warned, but kept complaining. She was then gang-raped and tortured with a bayonet. Three men were eventually arrested for this crime. One died in prison. The other two were pardoned by President Karzai. Her husband complained and was shot dead. Her son is now missing. Stories like this help the Taliban recruit new soldiers.

Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers

S-D: Who are the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers (AYPV)?

Hakim: In 2008, at Bamyan College, I organized weekly workshops to discuss peace. The students concluded that it was impossible, so I asked them what should they do as a consequence and they formed a multi-ethnic group. We did a peace walk dressed in white. People thought it was a little funny. (There is a lot of cynicism here.) I received death threats and we had to convince the government that we had no hidden agenda. We went from village to village to build the group. Gradually, more young people came together as volunteers, working for peace and speaking the truth. And then, when internationals came for a visit, the AYPV built a peace park and erected a sign in front of the empty niches where the giant Bamyan Buddha statues used to be. The US ambassador spoke to the boys and promised to deliver their anti-war message to President Obama, but did not. The AYPV made peace items out of leather and sent them to Pashtuns in the south to make a gesture of solidarity with young people and to express a clear voice for peace. In context of the bitter ethnic divisions here from the Taliban rule, a man named Mohammad said, "I can't believe there could be such love," and joined the group.

The AYPV have held a number of international conversations on peace by Skype and, along with Open Society, held the first peace march in Kabul. You can see this march on YouTube at:*www.livewithoutwars.org*.

The Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers put a question mark on the table. Is there another option to killing 10 civilians to remove one potentially dangerous person? Bamyan has security without a big US presence. We need to ask why.

Abdulai, 16: My father was killed by the Taliban in 2000. We had to run away in the snow. My older brother had to carry me. Today, people are suffering at the hands of three groups: insurgents, the US, and NATO. If the US has not brought security in ten years, why should we hope it would do so in twenty? We are so tired of war. I don't want the Taliban to come to power, but blood cannot wash away blood. I want reconciliation.

Hakim, Ali, Ghulamai, & Scott on a conference call for peace

Mohammad, 20: Terrorism has its roots in hate, lack of understanding, poverty, discrimination, prejudice, and misuse of religion. None of these problems can be resolved by war, by killing. We need to think about real solutions. We need to build more person to person relations. If someone in Nevada knows Abdulai, they will be more involved and make more demands for peace. We want every violent group out— NATO, Afghan warlords, and the Taliban.

Americans feel Afghans are wild, uncontrolled people with a tendency to become Talibs. The US says that if they leave, everyone will turn to the Taliban and they will take over, but this is not true. So many Afghans had so much pain under the Taliban. They hate them, even in the south. It would take a fool to accept them. They may take power by force, but the people will not accept them and will fight back. The withdrawal we picture is not irresponsible. After all the damage the US has done, they must not go in such a way that mayhem breaks out. They must promote local safety and leave. But they must leave.

Ali, **15**: If the US and NATO kills one of my family members and offers me its $2,000 compensation, I will not take the money. I will demand that they be held accountable.

Ghulamai, 14: In my opinion, Afghanistan has two enemies, the Taliban and America. If the US leaves, we can find a solution to the other. We have to solve these problems ourselves.

Kieran Dwyer
Director of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

On April 6, five days after 12 UN workers were killed in Mazar-e-Sharif, Kieran met with the AYPV and told them: "There are no easy answers for your experiences. I wish I could say that I could promise you solutions. I see hope in your faces.... I see young people who have hope and are taking action and this is what changes the world. Imagine 15 million young Afghans; if all could be inspired by you, that would change Afghanistan forever.

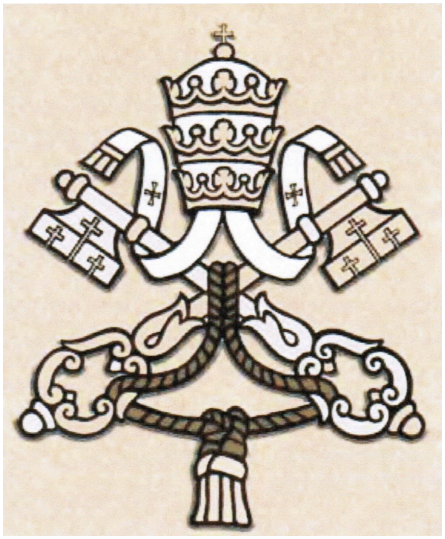
You are not alone. You have each other. In our fear and our pain and our worries, if you have a friend and they have a friend and you reach out to young people in Kandahar and in the US, this can make a difference.... Even when life is hard, you have such open hearts and open faces, and that's how we work for peace in this world.... Today you have given me 'nutrition,' you have given me heart food." Ω

Much to Our Chagrin...

by the Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker community

Bishop William H. Morris oversaw a diocese almost as big as Germany in Queensland, Australia. He estimated that, by 2014, his diocese will have only 19 priests to provide pastoral care for more than 40 parishes separated by hundreds of miles. In an Advent 2006 Pastoral Letter, Bishop Morris said that, if Church rules changed, he would be willing to ordain women and married men to help address the clergy shortage. On May 2, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI relieved Bishop Morris for his openness to women's ordination.

The Vatican's decision unleashed a wave of criticism from Morris' diocesan flock, those who support the ordination of women and married priests, and, most forcefully, from the victims of clergy sex abuse. The latter group was especially angry because the Vatican has acted slowly or not at all to remove bishops who knowingly transferred pedophile priests.



In 2002, just as subpoenas were being issued for Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law to testify in court on his knowledge of pedophile priests, Pope John Paul II put the cardinal in charge of the prestigious Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. Although Cardinal Law is now 79, four years beyond the retirement age for prelates, Pope Benedict has still not asked for his resignation.

In 2010, after it was revealed that at least 570 children had been abused between 1940 and 2010 in the Diocese of Dublin, Ireland, Pope Benedict refused to accept the resignation of two auxiliary bishops implicated in the cover-up. In response, the US-based Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests said, "The Pope is sending an alarming message to Church employees across the globe. Even widespread documentation of the concealment of child sex abuse crimes and the coddling of criminals won't cost you your job in the Church."

On April 4, 2011, at Marquette University Law School, in an address to a conference on clergy sex abuse, Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, who had pressed the auxiliaries to resign, said, "I still cannot accept the situation that no-one need assume accountability in the face of the terrible damage that was done to children in the Church of Christ in Dublin and in the face of how that damage was addressed."

On April 14, 2011, retired Belgian bishop Roger Vangheluwe gave a television interview during which he admitted to, and made light of, sexually abusing his nephew for 13 years. He met sharp disapproval from the other Belgian bishops, but was not chastised by the Vatican.

Meanwhile, the mere suggestion of openness to women's ordination by Bishop Morris led to his swift removal. It is difficult not to see Bishop Morris's treatment, coupled with the 2011 excommunication of Rev. Roy Bourgeois, MM, who called for women's ordination, as disproportionate and pastorally damaging.

Like Dorothy Day, who continually prodded the Catholic hierarchy to end its support for war, we pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire today's Church leaders to grow closer to Gospel values. It is beyond our comprehension that Christ would tolerate child sex abuse or the exclusion of women and married men from equality in Christian ministry. Ω

Grace Duffy

Mary is not an idol.
The only Savior is God,
Jesus Christ,
but Mary is the human instrument,
the daughter of Adam,
the daughter of Israel,
a people's embodiment,
sister of our race,
who by her holiness
was able to incarnate in history
God's divine life.
The true homage that a Christian
can make to Mary is,
like her,
to make the effort
to incarnate God's life
in the fluctuations
of our fleeting history. Ω

Oscar Romero

Editor's Note: Óscar Romero (August 15, 1917–March 24, 1980) was a Roman Catholic priest in El Salvador who became the Archbishop of San Salvador. As archbishop, he witnessed numerous violations of human rights and began a ministry speaking out on behalf of the poor and victims of the country's civil war. His conscience led him to embrace a nonviolent form of liberation theology. In 1980, he was assassinated while celebrating Mass. His murder provoked international outcry for human rights reform in El Salvador and an end to US military aid to the junta which conspired to kill him. He is considered a saint by many people.

Easy Essays

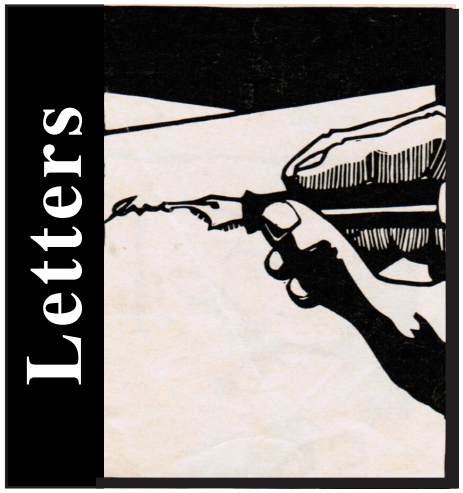
by Peter Maurin

A New Society

To be radically right
is to go to the roots
by fostering a society
based upon creed,
systematic unselfishness,
and gentle personalism.
To foster a society
based on creed, instead of greed,
on systematic unselfishness
instead of systematic selfishness,
on gentle personalism
instead of rugged individualism,
is to create a new society
within the shell of the old.

They and We

People say: "They don't do this,
they don't do that."
Always "They" and never "I."
People should say:
"They are crazy for doing this
and not doing that
but I don't need to be crazy
the way they are crazy." Ω



Hi Scott,
Your most recent newsletter–April/May, 2011– was like *deus ex machina* to me. Where we live, we belong to a Newman Parish, which serves the University of North Carolina. I have been pushing for more attention to Cardinal Newman and his thinking and writing. I got permission to give quotes from his writings in the parish weekly bulletin—and I put the first batch together from your wonderful "Reflections by Blessed John Henry Newman" page. I have most of his books and will start digging out more, so I can keep the weekly quotes going!

Also, you might be interested in my weekly prayer that I insert in the prayer of the faithful when the lector says, "For what more shall we pray?"

For example, on Sunday, February 6, 2011, I prayed, "That while we welcome the growth of male deacons in our Church to help with the decline in priestly vocations, we also pray that our ruling Pontificators remember that the blessed Phoebe was a deacon praised by Saint Paul in his lecture to the Romans, and take his lesson to heart and encourage the growth of woman deacons to help our struggling Church, we pray to the Lord."

Love and Thanks,

Bill Sommers
Pittsboro, North Carolina

Dear Scott & Claire,
I get so excited when *The Catholic Radical* arrives — (I have to confess it's the only CW paper I always read cover to cover)! I loved the "old fart" article, Scott, and the hospitality-as-springtime metaphor. It was timely reminder to watch for shifts which may be subtle in people, rather than feeling worried that their lives seem stagnant and lost.

Actually, *our* life can feel quite stagnant at times and I wonder what we are achieving living this fringe, alien lifestyle surrounded by people, in our local community, who are, at best, disinterested. The problem is that the depth and meaning in our life is irresistible — so, "Where else could we go?" as Saint Peter said. And so, the "hopeful farming" of hospitality and peacework continue. Thanks so much for your words. They watered my seed-planting little heart....

God bless you all.

Anne Rampa
Peter Maurin CW Farm
Queensland, Australia

Editor's Note: At this writing, Anne faces up to six months in jail for a February 18 demonstration at an abortion clinic. Her husband, Jim Dowling, faced 7 years in prison in 2007 for an anti-war demonstration at a US military facility. "We both have a consistent life ethic," Anne told a local reporter, "We both believe that we can't solve our problems using violence."

Catholic Worker Calendar

June 6, 20 & July 11, 25 —Mass: Join us in prayer and song at 7:30 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

June 3 & July 1—Consistent Life Vigil: Please join our monthly vigil against war and abortion. Noon to 1 P.M., Military Recruiting Station, 255 Park Ave, and Planned Parenthood, 470 Pleasant Street, Worcester

July 10: Remembering Father Bernie: Please join us in recalling the marvelous life of Father Bernie Gilgun, a genuine friend to the poor and apostle for peace. 2 P.M. Call 508 753-3588 for details.

June 16 & July 21—Ta'anit Tzedek: Jewish Fast for Gaza Prayer Vigil: Please join us in a Jewish prayer and fast for an end to the Israeli siege on Gaza. Noon-1 P.M. In front of Clark University on Main Street, Worcester.

Pablo Picaso

For more information, call: 508 753-3588 or email theresecw2@gmail.com

Mason Street Musings

In the quarter century since our house opened its doors to homeless men and women – first on Jacques Avenue and then, after a disastrous fire, here on Mason Street – we have provided hospitality to over two thousand guests. Most have called our house their home only once, but a few, unable to sustain themselves in a world that assigns them no value, have turned to us on more than one occasion. Woven together, their problems form a tapestry of life on the streets. The sudden loss of a job, lifetimes of addiction to alcohol or drugs, a painful divorce, debilitating mental illness — these are all reasons that bring people to our door. No matter why they are here, though, they have one thing in common: they are Christ. They have come to us to be loved and served as Jesus asked. As the Cistercian monk, Thomas Merton, said, "Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy."

We have other guests as well, guests of the heart, people who have worked their way, oftentimes unbidden, into the fabric of our lives. Some we love; a few we hold in deep respect. Others we don't know what to do with.

Osama bin Laden was one of these people. Although we never met him, we never spoke with him, for over nine years, since that awful September morning, the media has repeatedly kept him in our presence. We had a pretty firm opinion of him as well. He was an historic bad guy. And yet, on the day he was killed – murdered, really – I couldn't hold to the

Grace Duffy

public reaction to his death. People rejoiced. Demonstrators around the country reveled in the death of another human being. On radio station WEEI, Glenn Ordway said that it was a day on which we could all be proud to be American. The following day's *Worcester Telegram & Gazette's* headline heralded "Terrorist's violent end celebrated." If this is what it means to be an American, I want no part of it. If this is patriotism, count me out. If this is why folks "pledge allegiance to the flag," I'm glad I never do.

But life does indeed go on here at the house. Claire recently journeyed to Pennsylvania for a brief visit with her friend, Robert, incarcerated on death row and dying of pancreatic cancer. Scott writes, gives presentations on his trip to Afghanistan, and runs (Believe me, there's a whole "Mason Street Musings" here!). Dave spends a lot of his precious free time working to stop the scourge of foreclosures. Time flies!

We've been scraping, priming, and painting our house, by fits and starts, for the past three years. Claire yearns for the job to be completed. If any of you has the time and feels up to giving us a hand, give us a call. Being able to work on a ladder is a plus!

No matter what tasks occupy us or whom we have to contend with, let's leave folks like bin Laden for God to figure out. In the end, He'll be their judge. Christ calls us to love everyone, enemies as well as friends, whether they're Mother Theresa, Osama bin Laden, or Barack Obama. We've got our work cut out for us. Ω

Ken

SS. Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker
52 Mason Street
Worcester, MA 01610
(508) 753-3588 & (508) 753-3089

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